

THE BEE CALENDAR.

HOW IT BEGINS AND HOW IT GOES ON.

REVELLING AMONG FLOWERS.

THE LAW OF Give and Take—Distilling the Seed—Fables About the Queen Bee—A Literary Club Meeting.

(Correspondence of the Dispatch.)

AFTON, VA., April 9.—The bees have their calendar. It begins with the willow-passes and the early crocus, and reckons time by the hyacinths, apple-blossoms, covey, and thistles, to wind up with the imperial banquets of later summer.

The first "spread" was given last week, when the warm moist days drugged wide open the fruit-blooms and floated them out to the swarming revelers.

Nature is called a kind mother and a good provider; as an economist she is a marvel. While the bees could never keep house at all without a succession of blossoms the year round—say in mid-winter—the flowers themselves need each a time when they can depend upon the insects to set their seed.

What a lesson of helpfulness even the simplest things of nature teach us!

The crocus is a bee-flower; a tiny open umbrella turned upside-down, that makes ready bellies to feed the honey-bees before they are captivated by the gaudy beauties of later spring. Among the many dainties are the wood anemones, and closely crowding for the little pollen-cups come the bluebells.

Nothing is more wistful than their sunny faces, which Shakespeare calls "cock-pods of yellow hue," and tells us they "do paint the meadows with delight."

No wonder the honey-gatherer is called a "busy bee," while this and the violets, daisies, and wild hyacinths wait all at once to be the flower brokers. The trillium is another early bird, indigenous to swampy woods and shaded creek banks. The old English name is wade-robin, for bird and blossom gladden the woods together. The trillium, with its cluster of three leaves and triple sepals of white or dark-purple, is a sort of poem relating to the heights, and each belongs to the family of lily roots.

In short, lineal it might outrun all the floral aristocrats. Probably the first flowers which appeared on earth, unfolding in the dense shades of giant trees and ferns, and which nature's forces have carbonized into coal for us, resembled this homely trillium.

MOUNTAIN IVY.

Later on the bee comes for honey to the mountain ivy—properly the flowering laurel—but the ivy is not a flower, and here we have our sweetest illustration of how the trillium is another early bird, indigenous to swampy woods and shaded creek banks. The old English name is wade-robin, for bird and blossom gladden the woods together. The trillium, with its cluster of three leaves and triple sepals of white or dark-purple, is a sort of poem relating to the heights, and each belongs to the family of lily roots.

Under the wise management of Mr. C. Sheib, the institute has a good baseball team this season, and one which seems really in earnest about its work.

Farmers are now busy with every horse and hand they can get hold of, getting in their spring oats and corn. The wheat crop is looking capital, with prospects increasing for a splendid yield every day.

County-Chairman John C. Harless, of the Republican party, and Dr. R. T. Ellett returned Thursday morning from Washington, where they have been to see about the distribution of the county offices. They express themselves as highly pleased with their visit, and the office-seekers are correspondingly delighted.

How doth the little busy bee,

Improve each shining hour!

There is a story of mythology that Ariadne, who was the son of Apollo and a Thessalian maiden, once upon a time lost his bees by famine and disease. In distress, he applied to his mortal mother, and through her was initiated into a mystic rite by which a swarm of bees was produced from a slaughtered ox.

THE QUEEN BEE.

Some fables teach that the queen bee came from the brain of an ox and the common bee from its tail. This legend appears in the best myth in literature, from the story of Samson, in the Book of Judges. In the vineyards of Timnah Samson killed a lion, and after a while, on his way to fetch his bride, he turned aside to see the carcass of the animal. Samson took the honey in his hand, which, I think, proves that his strength was not only in his limbs, and he went on eating the honey. The marriage, it is said, took place on the spot, and a riddle propounded from the honey and the lion, secured all his subsequent domestic bliss.

In the curiosities of the floral and insect kingdoms, some of Darwin's experiments almost bridge over the gulf that divides the animal from the vegetable.

The most remarkable of these, to be met with nowhere else in the world, comes from North Carolina. It is called "Venus's Fly-Trap," the "pitcher plant" of the Middle States, and the "sun-newt," which grows mostly along the Jersey coasts, are others. Of these, the "Venus Fly-Trap" is, perhaps, the most carnivorous. The flower itself is pretty, but leafless, and grows from eight to ten inches in height; the little cluster of leaves petalled blossoms rising erect like a rose of creamy white or pale reddish purple.

The trap consists of two soft, velvety leaves, fringed with delicate bristles, and hinged together on one side; from the edges exudes a sweet fluid, resembling honey, that tempts the deluded fly or insect to venture near the edges. As the hinged close, the two leaves come together, the bristles interlock, and the hapless victim is caught in a coil, from which escape is impossible. More than that, he is actually digested alive, and the secretion, which is all this time poured from the rosy glands, continues until the trap-doors are reopened and the skeleton is flung out.

It is impossible not to feel a thrill of superstition at this battle between the animate and the inanimate—where the insect always wins—and their ways for sustenance are certainly wonderfully like the methods of conscious, reasoning beings.

WHO KNOWS?

And, after all, who knows? Life, for all our vaunted wisdom, is a mystery yet unraveled; we come, we go, the beginning is in doubt, the ending assured to us only by faith. But of the flowers, the tender, lovely, early flowers, about which one's thoughts cluster only in fragrant memories—the best beloved is probably Speedwell. Blue-purple, with purple stripes, that grow all over the common soil, the foxglove spider of bloom "Speedwell" is the old good-by for parting friends, and means so much in the little word; the hope that our traveler will reach home, or elsewhere, safely and soon; that all may be well there and with him afterwards. The "Speedwell's" botanical name is Veronica, to which a sweet and serious explanation has been given.

There is a legend that among the daughters of Jerusalem who followed our Lord on His way to Calvary, there were one Jewish maiden whose heart was stirred by the Divine face marred with anguish. Her feelings she could express only in one simple act.

She banded the Saviour a handkerchief

that he might wipe from his face the way-side dust and the blood flowing from the wounds made by the crown of thorns. When he gave it back, the legend states, he found that the stains on the linen made a perfect picture of his face.

A pictured souvenir of this is to be this handkerchief is still preserved at St. Peter's, in Rome. It is called Vera Ieonica—the real Ieonica. Later monkish authorities, groping dimly in church traditions, changed the name slightly and canonized the Jewish maiden to whom it belonged. She was called Saint Veronica.

This does not explain the Speedwell's botanical name of Veronica, except that the hoar-frost might have reminded him that its blue and innocent eye is the likeness of the pure heaven at which it gazes.

A fragment of verse I saw not long since in an old music-book may have been written on the gentle "Speedwell."

"There is a flower—a little flower—Tinged deep with faith's unchanging hue."

Pure as the ether in its hour Of fadeless and serenest blue."

In the near approach of Palm Sunday and Holy Week we are very quiet. Beyond the making of little palm crosses and wreaths, there will be no observance of the Passion season, though of late years regular services are held in each of the churches of Easter.

The "Literary Cup" held its semi-monthly meeting at "Chestnut Ridge" Tuesday evening. The programme was of unusual interest. A most excellent paper on the value of time was given by Mrs. John G. Spots, and Miss Helen Hay read an original bicycle ghost story that was very bright and full of humor. The "Art Gallery" was a gem of local hits.

Mrs. William Goodwin is visiting her son in Clinton Forge.

Miss Bettie Lipcomb is spending some weeks in Charlottesville.

Blacksburg Points.

BLACKSBURG, VA., April 10. (Special)—Mr. John Lybrook, a native of Blacksburg, but for the past ten years a valued employee in one of the departments in Washington, is at home, on a vacation. He is a member of the Washington Club, and his wife, Mrs. Anna, was a Montgomery girl. Miss Stahlmauer, from the southern end of the county, but who has lived in Washington for a number of years.

Our people fear very much that the failure to secure long-distance telephone-service for Blacksburg has failed, through the failure to secure the requisite number of subscribers.

On the other great cattle farm in Virginia is that of Major John T. Cowan, of Montgomery. It lies immediately on New River, and has acres upon acres of magnificent meadows and blue-grass fields, in which the cattle revel.

The Major is a fine man, and the cattle are in excellent condition. He is a good breeder, keeping only the finest stock, and attending to them well. Recently he sold to Mr. Robert L. Lewis of Roanoke county, a fine bull and six calves, all of them the thoroughly-bred short-horns.

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Rebels or Patriots.

(Charleston News and Courier) The United States Senate by a unanimous vote on Monday, after some discussion of its terms, adopted a preamble and resolution setting forth that it had heard that "General Ruiz Rivera, a leader of the Cuban army of independence, recently captured by the Spanish forces, is to be tried by drum-head court-martial and shot," and that in the Senate's judgment "if such information be found true," it is the duty of the President "to protest to the Spanish Government against such a violation of the rules of civilized warfare."

The resolution is, of course, mere bravado, but the preamble puts the United States in a false position. It describes General Rivera as "a leader in the Cuban army of independence." The Spanish Government may very properly ask, if such information be found true, that the Cuban rebels, who are the Confederate army in the United States, be tried by drum-head court-martial and shot.

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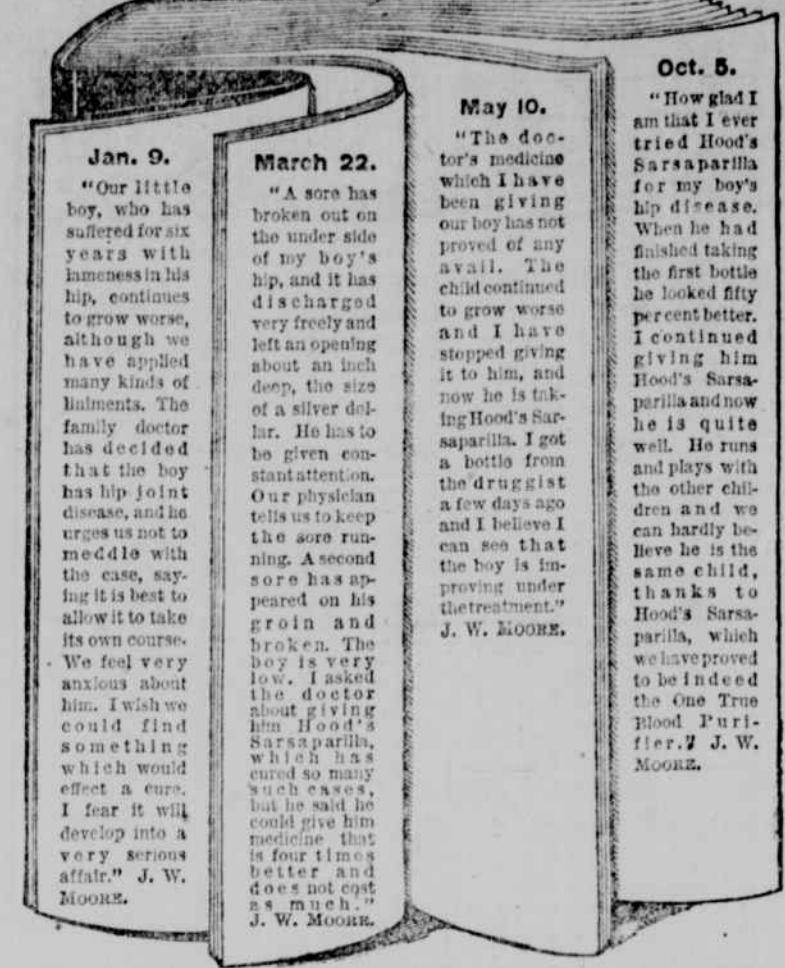
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Pages from the Diary of Capt. John W. Moore, Newbury, Ind.



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